



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
Phone: (808) 587-0401
Fax: (808) 587-0390

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**DLNR ANNOUNCES FIVE-MONTH BOTTOMFISH SEASON
CLOSURE IN STATE WATERS**

HONOLULU – The Department of Land and Natural Resources announced that it will officially implement a temporary closure, effective April 14, 2008, for bottomfishing in state waters of the main Hawaiian islands. All fishing for any of the seven Hawai‘i restricted bottomfish species, which include ehu, gindai, kalekale, lehi, onaga, opakapaka and hapuupuu,, will be prohibited in the main Hawaiian islands state waters during the closed season.

This declaration was made following a determination from commercial landings data that the current fishing season’s total allowable catch of 178,000 pounds had been reached in mid-March. The total allowable catch represents the scientific measure intended to stop excess fishing effort of bottomfish species, specifically seven snapper and grouper species referred to as the “Deep 7.”

The closure will be in effect through at least August 31, 2008 and will complement a federal bottomfishing closure that will take effect April 16, 2008 in all federal marine waters (from 3 nautical miles and seaward) in the main Hawaiian islands.

“Since 2005, bottomfish in the main Hawaiian islands have been declared to be in a state of overfishing. If the federal total allowable catch were to be exceeded, this could have adverse consequences on Hawai‘i’s fishery in the future,” said Laura H. Thielen, DLNR chairperson.

In the interest of protecting the sustainability of this important fishery, the Board of Land and Natural Resources recently approved the closure of state waters to bottomfishing. All commercial and non-commercial (recreational and subsistence) fishers shall cease fishing for the “Deep 7” bottomfish species in the main Hawaiian islands until the fishery is reopened.

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Jurisdiction over the bottomfish fishery is jointly held by the federal and state government. Both state and federal fisheries agencies have been working cooperatively on regulations to implement and monitor the total allowable catch during the current fishing season. The current fishing season began on October 1, 2007 and was scheduled to continue until May 1, 2008 had the total allowable catch not been reached sooner.

Maps of closed State marine waters to bottomfishing (seasonal closure and bottomfish restricted fishing areas) will be available on the DLNR website from the effective date, April 14, 2008. Go to the website at <http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/dar/> or call the Division of Aquatic Resources office nearest you.

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For more information media contact
Deborah Ward
DLNR Public Information Specialist
Phone: (808) 587-0320